

DHS Matters!

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Submit stories by e-mail to DHS-Newsletter@michigan.gov

Bowlers raise funds for children's party

By Don Fellows, Services Specialist
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More than 30 Western Wayne County CFS staff, family, friends, and even a few Western Wayne alumni met June 3 at Skore Lanes in Taylor. They celebrated the first Western Wayne Bowl-A-Thon to benefit the Children's Christmas Party.

Every year the Western Wayne staff throws a Christmas party for the children served by their office which included food, gifts, clowns, games, entertainment and even a visit from Santa. Bowlers played three games each, enjoyed pizza, soft drinks, and were able to purchase additional food and beverages if they wished.

Not every one turned in their scores but, among those who did, Vince D'Aguanno (former Western Wayne staffer and husband of foster care supervisor Tammie Rusch) had the single high game at 191 as well as the highest average of 173. Congratulations and thanks go to Tammy Nicklas who won the 50-50 drawing and brought 12 family members and friends to bowl with us. Other door prizes went to Joyce Forbes, Phyllis Owens, and Tom Anderzak (Christine Baron's brother).

Over \$300 was raised for the Children's Christmas Party. Thanks to all who participated.

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Bowlers pictured left-right: Christine Baron, Robert Geiger, Vince D'Aguanno, Joe McDermott and Gerene Janeczko.

Bay County DHS celebrated children in April, employees and Memorial Day in May

From Nancy J. Mueller
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Bay County DHS celebrated "Bring Your Sons & Daughters To Work Day" April 28 where 20-25 children participated. Bay County has participated in this for many years. The older children sometimes stay for the whole day and help staff by stamp addressing envelopes, copying nonconfidential items and generally helping out where needed. Employee Appreciation Day was celebrated May 4 with a luncheon for all staff provided by the management administrative staff. Pizza, salad and beverages were served along with a huge decorated cake that stated, "We appreciate our staff."

Memorial Day (May 30) was observed not only with a day off but a bulletin board display honoring staff family members who have or are serving currently in the armed forces. Several employees brought in articles, pictures and military documents honoring their loved ones. Anonymously, someone wrote a brief piece about, "What Memorial Day Means to Me," that said this:

"Years ago, Memorial Day was more of a holiday for me, but in the last few years things have changed. Now I watch the news and see a flag-draped coffin being carried off a plane, thinking that it could be my child, thanking God that it is not. My eyes get misty and I whisper a prayer for the soldier and the family. Our country has become more vulnerable and peace is a luxury a lot of nations don't know. Freedom is not just a word. It is something tangible that we must continuously work to preserve. We must think back as our parents and grandparents once did, remembering the courage it took to fight for our beliefs and not waiting for someone else to stand up. We must stand up as they did....each one.

"In the last few years I have been fortunate to witness some beautiful ceremonies in Washington D.C. – changing of the guard for the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier; observing July 4th sitting on the Capitol lawn, ceremonies at different memorials on official holidays for our military. It makes me proud to be an American and to know that God has blessed our nation. I pray that we will always be proud of our nation and that our young citizens will realize what the past means and (what is) their responsibility for the future."



Tim Liggins, foster care specialist at Kalamazoo County DHS, recently competed in the National Physique Committee's Junior Nationals Body Building Competition in Chicago. After a grueling diet and workout regimen, Tim placed in the Top 5 after prejudging. The night show allowed Tim to "show his stuff" and performed an exciting and entertaining routine. After it was all said and done Tim placed third out of 20 competitors in his light heavyweight group. Some of his co-workers were present and cheered Tim's success. Tim will be competing again soon, possibly in Atlanta, and has hopes to reach the pro level.

—from **Megan Reetz** & **Sarah McCree**

Berrien County muscle aids Habitat for Humanity

Berrien County DHS shows its muscle (at right) providing construction work for the Benton Harbor Jimmy Carter Work Project for Habitat for Humanity. During the week of June 20-24 former President Jimmy Carter and 1,500-plus volunteers worked with Habitat for Humanity to build 24 new homes in Benton Harbor. Pictured are Berrien DHS employees (left to right) **Gabriela Bangkuai**, **Pam Dukes**, **Debbie Reaume**, **Darcy Minnick**, **Charmae Sanders**, **Regina Moore** and **Tina Leitz**.

— from **Lee Stults**



Look what we are doing at Fort Wayne

From Mary Alice McKinney

Wayne County DHS Fort Wayne District, Detroit

McKinneyM@michigan.gov

Did you know that heart disease and stroke are America's No. 1 and No. 3 killers? The risks can be reduced and lives can be saved but saving lives requires education, research and money.

During the months of March, April, and May 2005 the Wayne County Fort Wayne District raised \$3,620 for the American Stroke Association. The funds were collected through a series of activities such as a letter writing campaign, hot dog sales, raffles, bake sales, silent auction and fruit sales.

Rejenia Francis, a family independence specialist at the Fort Wayne District office, went to San Diego, Calif. to walk in the American Stroke Association's 26.2-mile Marathon on June 5. She participated to raise awareness of stroke and heart disease. She carried all the best wishes and luck of her Fort Wayne colleagues with her every step of the way. She is our hero.



Three Marquette County DHS employees participated in the March of Dimes Walk America on April 30. Pictured from left to right are: **Marisa Lackey**, son **Tony Lackey**, **Rose Tasson** and **Kerry Sherbinow**. – from **Liz Swanson**

DHS honors octogenarian volunteer

By Ginny Flynn, Buyer

DHS Purchasing Section, Lansing

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The Department of Human Services honored a very special lady June 9 when **Fran Graham** visited Lansing. Fran has been (and continues to be) a volunteer for DHS for the past 25 years. Her day began with the presentation of a letter of gratitude on behalf of all of us from DHS director Marianne Udow. A short time later Fran was presented with a tribute given to her at the Capitol from state Rep. Alexander Lipsey of Kalamazoo, again acknowledging her outstanding contributions to DHS.



Right above: Department of Human Services volunteer Fran Graham with DHS director Marianne Udow.

Inset photo: Graham with Dean Miedema (left) and state Rep. Alexander Lipsey of Kalamazoo.

During her visit she delighted us as she recalled her life before DHS. She worked for private physicians and for the Veterans Administration Hospital. She spent two and one-half years overseas during World War II with the Women's Army Corps in Algiers, Africa and Italy. She then worked for the U.S. Defense Department, federal Civil Defense Department and the Defense Logistics Services Center. Fran was present in Nevada for 19 of the 25 underground atomic bomb tests in the desert.

Fran has tirelessly worked for DHS a total of 14,040 hours and counting. Of her two and one-half decades of service, 20 years have been spent working for Dean Miedema at Academy Hall, a juvenile halfway house in Kalamazoo. The first five years were spent working for Kalamazoo County DSS. Even though her eyesight isn't what it used to be and she had a health issue to deal with last year, she continues to come to work on Tuesdays and Thursdays with her optimistic attitude.

Fran's life has been the epitome of community service and service to her country. What would keep most people down is simply a challenge to be faced to Fran. She delighted all present with her warm smile and wonderful stories of a life that is a true inspiration to anyone lucky enough to spend some time with Fran and listen.

Perhaps what makes this delightful lady even more impressive is her age: she's 88.

■ The author works in DHS Departmental Services Division.

Date: June 29
To: Robyn Loviska, Director
Alger County DHS, Munising
Subj: Anne O'Neill

I want to comment on how much I respect Anne O'Neill. Prior to the family team meeting (the wrap coordinator) and I were staffing a family that is struggling, mostly because of the sabotage from a sister. (The coordinator) and I came up with an idea (and) brought it to Anne. She agreed to petition a family to court and the second family for homelessness, if the second family did not find alternate housing. Anne was wonderful. I had some very mixed feelings about advocating for the petition but it was clear that the two children from the second family were putting the two young children at risk. Anne agreed the risk was there, stated she had evidence of it, and agreed it was the best thing to do. All the while, the emotion she was feeling was evident in her face. She takes her job seriously and understands the impact. She does not act on impulse and has the children's best interest at heart and keeps the parents strengths in the forefront of the situation. Just wanted you to hear what a great person you have on staff.

Katie Ritzenhein, Home Services Program Manager
Child and Family Services of the U.P., Marquette

Your letters,
intercepted
and otherwise

Date: June 27
To: DHS Matters!
Subj: W. Wimbush

I want to Thank Mr. Wimbush for all the work he has done and continues to do at the **Dexter-Elmhurst Community Center** on behalf of the clients and the community. It shows how much love and concern he has for the young people as well as the older people. He goes up and beyond the call of duty to find corporate funds and participation. I have always heard you can't get blood from a turnip; but I say you just haven't met W. Wimbush. I was told the summer program for computer classes had an overwhelming response from parents. There is now a waiting list with over 100 names. Not only do they offer other summer courses at the center they also provide Continental breakfast and lunch at no cost. Throughout the year Mr. Wimbush has offered other programs such as job fair, tax services, sports events and lunch for senior citizens just to name a few. Thanks again for a job well done.

Linda K. Berkley, Accountant Assistant
Wayne County Oakman-Grand River Adult Services District
Detroit

■ *W. Wimbush is manager of the Dexter-Elmhurst Community Center in Detroit for Wayne County DHS.*

Date: June 14
To: Richard Foster, Children's Services Supervisor
Sanilac County Department of Human Services, Sandusky
Subj: Lane Smith

This letter is to express my appreciation for your consideration and, particularly, for Lane Smith's response to my second request for additional information (on a case). I have shown the addendum that was sent to Judge Kathryn George, who found it to be very helpful. As a result I anticipate no further requests regarding this matter will be necessary. I also wish to express my appreciation to your swift response time and very pleasant and cooperative demeanor during our conversations. Lane Smith did a very timely home inspection and response at your request. Should you need this county's assistance in the future, do not hesitate to contact me.

Janice L. Bentley, guardianship supervisor
Macomb County Probate Court, Mt. Clemens

■ *Lane Smith is a foster care worker for Sanilac County DHS. Kathy O'Connor submitted this letter for publication.*

To submit a letter for publication

- Ensure your supervisor knows about this and approves.
- If the letter writer is a child, a parent discussing a child, or a DHS client, have the customer sign **Consent for Publication** form, which is downloadable from the MS Word template as form **0199.dot** If the letter writer is an adult and does not have a DHS case, please acquire their verbal approval to publish the letter.
- Send the letter and copy of the consent form to by email to DHS-Newsletter@michigan.gov or fax to 517-373-8471
- Include the letter writer's hometown and the job classification(s) of employee(s) cited in the letter.

DHS Matters! is a product of Michigan's Department of Human Services
Marianne Udow, Director • Karen Stock, Director, Office of Communications
Larry VanDeSande, editor • Submit stories by e-mail to: DHS-Newsletter@michigan.gov